

An additional reduction in state appropriations to Northland Pioneer College (NPC), the Navajo County Community College District, would have a severe and lasting negative impact on the ability of the institution to accomplish its mission.

Northland Pioneer College provides educational services to citizens in Navajo and Apache Counties, two of the most economically challenged counties in Arizona and in the United States. Our service area also includes three Native American lands: Navajo, Hopi and White Mountain Apache. Native Americans represent more than sixty percent of our residents. Nearly 33% of the State's total Native American population lives in our service area. All residents of Navajo County and Apache County would be benefited if higher education through Northland Pioneer College could continue to be offered as nearly free as possible. Many of our students rely on tuition rates that are among the lowest in the state to obtain higher education or receive workforce training to effectively compete in the marketplace.

Individual and corporate property ownership accounts for less than 22% in our large service area of 21,158 square miles, with nearly 40% of the land being set aside as reservations and the balance held by the State and the Federal governments. Property ownership significantly affects the College District's ability to secure revenue through local property taxes.

Responses to mid-year revisions of State appropriations are particularly difficult as programs and activities have been started with expectations developed based on initial funding assumptions. Any mid-year changes are further limited by the time required to effect the changes and the lack of a full fiscal impact because of the smaller amount of time remaining in the budget year.

In response to an additional 15% reduction in state operating appropriations, Northland Pioneer College will consider seeking District Governing Board approval to obtain additional revenue through tuition by restructuring the tuition and fee schedule for regular students, introducing variable tuition based on program cost or partner participation and eliminating the senior citizen discount.

To reduce costs Northland Pioneer College will seek District Governing Board approval to consider significant reductions in educational programs based on cost, content and location. Additional steps include the continued deferral of critical facility maintenance; evaluation of normal operational hours and the number of days services will be provided during the calendar year; a broader implementation of distance learning options. Faculty and staff may need to accept additional work load with no additional pay and with a possible reduction in benefits.

A mid-year reduction to State Equalization Aid would have a much more severe impact on the ability of the Navajo County Community College District to provide educational services under the current model of operation and would require a comprehensive review with stakeholders prior to making any final determinations of how the District might proceed.